



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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6 INDIVIDUALS - INCLUDING CORRECTION OFFICER & 2 TEACHERS CHARGED IN \$82,000 HOUSING FRAUD IN THE BRONX

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), and ROBERT T. JOHNSON, Bronx District Attorney, announced today that 6 Bronx residents, including 3 current and former City employees - a Department of Correction Officer and 2 Board of Education (BOE) teachers - have been charged with stealing more than \$82,000 in government rent subsidies. The investigation focused on people who lied about their employment or household income and thereby fraudulently received subsidized housing benefits from the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

Commissioner Kuriansky and District Attorney Johnson said, "These arrests are part of an ongoing Citywide crackdown by DOI and the local district attorneys, which has, since 1995, resulted in the arrest of 224 residents - including 77 City, State, and Federal employees - charged with stealing over \$4.5 million in rent and welfare subsidies by hiding their income and assets from the City. Within the past 9 months alone, 41 individuals have been arrested for illegally receiving more than \$700,000 in government housing benefits by concealing their employment or household income from NYCHA. So far, 169 cases have resulted in conviction and more than \$2.2 million in court-imposed restitution."

NYCHA manages 346 public housing developments providing shelter to more than 535,000 tenants. In addition, NYCHA administers a federally-funded leased housing program known as Section 8. Under that program, tenants living in privately-owned dwellings can receive a government rent subsidy. The program presently covers nearly 75,000 families

The 6 defendants charged are all Section 8 tenants residing in various sections of the Bronx, including Crotona Park East, Morris Heights, Tremont, Melrose, Parkchester, and Olinville. They are accused of stealing, between April 1998 and June 2001, a total of \$82,386 in rent subsidies, in amounts ranging from \$7,802 to \$30,416, by concealing their actual household income from NYCHA.

These arrests are the first since the conclusion of NYCHA's 5-month Amnesty Program, which was introduced to public housing residents on September 1, 2001, and ended on January 31, 2002. The Amnesty Program afforded public housing residents, who were concealing their household income, an opportunity to voluntarily come forward, declare all household income and assets, and pay back any monies owed, or else face prosecution and eviction if later discovered. More than 3,500 NYCHA residents and Section 8 participants filed applications under the Amnesty Program.

Commissioner Kuriansky added, "The lesson these defendants and others would be wise to learn is that, with so many needy New Yorkers on long waiting lists for affordable public housing, the City will simply not be duped into providing subsidized apartments to people who can well afford to pay more or even live elsewhere."

District Attorney Johnson said, "We will be vigilant in our efforts to protect the interests of the truly needy. Hopefully, the filing of these charges will act as a deterrent to anyone who thinks about breaking the law for personal financial gain at the expense of those who are less fortunate."

GLORIA GREEN, a.k.a. GLORIA JONES, a BOE teacher and a foster parent registered with the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS), and her unemployed husband, have been residents of a 5-room apartment at 1380 University Avenue in the Morris Heights section since April 1998. GREEN has been charged with illegally obtaining \$30,416 in Section 8 rent subsidies by concealing from NYCHA, between April 1998 and May 2001, her employment as a teacher at P.S. 126, located at 175 West 166th Street in the Bronx. During this time, GREEN, while using the alias GLORIA JONES, earned between \$49,275 and \$54,743 a year. Meanwhile, GREEN falsely claimed to NYCHA that, during the period from 1998 to 2001, her total household income ranged from \$6,120 to \$10,893 a year and was derived from the foster care benefits she received and salaries she and her husband earned as Pastor and co-Pastor of Shout of Joy Baptist Church, located at 1392 Ogden Avenue in the Bronx. GREEN reported to NYCHA that they only earned \$30 to \$100 a month from "love offerings," and from preaching and speaking engagements. Between 1998 and 2001, GREEN'S rent share ranged from \$129 to \$287 a month, while the Section 8 program paid rent subsidies between \$742 and \$861 a month. In fact, GREEN should have paid a rent share of \$990 to \$1,029 a month.

ANGELA KING, a New York City Correction Officer, was charged with fraudulently receiving \$12,397.18 in rent subsidies from November 1999 to May 2001. KING, a Section 8 participant since 1995, has been receiving rent subsidies for a 4-room apartment at 1511 Sheridan Avenue in the Tremont section. Although KING has been employed as a Correction Officer on Rikers Island since 1998, earning between \$13,133 and \$38,979 a year, she failed to report this employment and income to NYCHA. Instead, King reported that during this period her household income ranged from \$7,800 to \$8,736 a year and was derived from her employment as a health aide for Gentle Care, at 201 East Fordham Road in the Bronx. Between 1999 and 2001, KING'S rent share ranged between \$96 and \$146 a month, while Section 8 paid rent subsidies of between \$540.69 and \$590.69. In fact, KING should have paid a rent share of \$689.69 a month for the apartment.

PAULETTE BROWN, a salesclerk at Macy's department store in Herald Square, was charged with fraudulently receiving \$10,283 in rent subsidies from November 1998 to December 2000. BROWN, who became a Section 8 participant on November 1, 1997, lives in a 5-room apartment at 1670 Longfellow Avenue in the Crotona Park East section. Although BROWN married in June 1998, she failed to report the presence in the apartment of her husband, as well as his income and employment as a Youth Officer for the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. From 1998 to 2000, BROWN'S household income, including her husband's salary, was between \$42,339 and \$45,742 a year. However, BROWN reported that her household income was wholly derived from her employment at Macy's, and that her income ranged from \$9,360.67 to \$12,896. During this time, BROWN paid a rent of between \$211 and \$232 a month, while receiving rent subsidies between \$379.82 and \$400.82 a month. BROWN should have been paying \$611.82 a month for her apartment.

KENDRA SUGGS, currently a receptionist at Mount Sinai/NYU Medical Center, has been charged with fraudulently receiving \$13,128 in rent subsidies from May 1998 to April 2001. SUGGS, a Section 8 participant from 1994 to 2001, received rent subsidies for a 3-room apartment at 2802 Olinville Avenue. For a

period of several years, SUGGS failed to report income she received from various employers, including Mount Sinai/NYU Health System, and the City University of New York, where she had worked as a secretary. From 1998 to 2001, SUGGS' actual income ranged from \$12,984 to \$25,852 a year. Instead, she reported that her sole source of income consisted of public assistance benefits totaling \$3,546 a year. SUGGS' rent share for that time period ranged from \$24 to \$26 a month, while the Section 8 program paid subsidies ranging from \$541.53 to \$566.23 a month. In fact, SUGGS should have been paying a rent ranging from \$209 to \$583 a month.

ISABEL RIVERA, a Section 8 participant since 1989 and a former resident of a 5-room apartment at 1500 Theirot Avenue in the Parkchester section, is charged with unlawfully obtaining \$8,360 in rent subsidies by concealing from NYCHA, between August 1998 and June 1999, her salary and employment as a BOE bilingual teacher assigned to P.S. 318 in the Bronx. During this time, RIVERA earned more than \$40,000 a year. RIVERA instead allegedly submitted false documentation to NYCHA that her household income totaled \$5,180 a year and was wholly derived from babysitting work. RIVERA'S rent share was \$44 a month, and her Section 8 rent subsidies totaled \$760 a month. In fact, RIVERA should have paid rent in the amount of \$804 a month.

Finally, BERSHAY PULLEY, a self-employed hairdresser, allegedly operating her business from her 4-room apartment located at 485 Courtlandt Avenue in the Melrose section, has been charged with fraudulently receiving \$7,802 in rent subsidies from June 1998 to April 2001. PULLEY, a Section 8 participant since 1997, failed to report to NYCHA her private business income, which ranged from \$12,000 to \$14,719, a year. Instead, PULLEY reported that her income was solely derived from public assistance benefits totaling \$4,584 a year. PULLEY'S rent share, during this period, ranged from \$49 to \$50 a month, while her Section 8 rent subsidies ranged between \$235 and \$302 a month. In fact, PULLEY should have paid between \$564 and \$589 a month in rent for her apartment.

The defendants have each been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a Class D felony, punishable by up to 7 years in prison. In addition, GREEN, KING, BROWN, SUGGS, and PULLEY have been charged with Offering a False Instrument For Filing in the First Degree, a Class E felony, punishable by up to 4 years in jail.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to NYCHA's Leased Housing Department for its cooperation and assistance in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI Assistant Commissioner and NYCHA Inspector General Steven A. Pasichow and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspectors General Edward Glander and Kevin Smith, Assistant Inspector General Bergia Telesford, Chief Investigator Rosemary Caruso, and Confidential Investigators Annette Eriksson and Louis Vega.

The prosecutions are being handled by Assistant District Attorneys Earamichia Brown, George DeMeo, Linda Tacoma, Juan Soto, Pina Terranova, and Elana Yeger, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Richard Baker, Chief, and Assistant District Attorney Andrew Kampel, of District Attorney Johnson's Arson and Economic Crimes Bureau.

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DEFENDANT INFORMATION:

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1. GLORIA GREEN, 55, of 1380 University Avenue, Bronx (\$30,416 in rent subsidies).
2. ANGELA KING, 29, of 1511 Sheridan Avenue, Bronx (\$12,397.18 in rent subsidies).
3. PAULETTE BROWN, 37, of 1670 Longfellow Avenue, Bronx (\$10,283.32 in rent subsidies).
4. KENDRA SUGGS, 27, of 1755 Story Avenue, Bronx, formerly of 2802 Olinville Avenue, Bronx (\$13,128 in rent subsidies).
5. ISABEL RIVERA, 57, of 1326 Grand Concourse, Bronx, formerly of 1500 Theirot Avenue, Bronx (\$8,360 in rent subsidies).
6. BERSHAY PULLEY, 31, of 485 Courtlandt Avenue, Bronx (\$7,802 in rent subsidies).